

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY
Fauquier County, Virginia

Policy Title: Tuition Reimbursement/Education Assistance
Section No.: 16-A

Effective Date: 05/17/04
Supersedes Policy: 03/17/03

I. PURPOSE

It is the objective of the Board of Supervisors to provide a Tuition Reimbursement/Education Assistance Program for employees to take courses leading to a formal professional accreditation or degree relating to their specific job duties.

II. SCOPE

Full-time permanent and part-time permanent employees who have completed their probationary periods are eligible to apply for tuition assistance.

III. DEFINITIONS

Tuition Reimbursement/Education Assistance Program

The Tuition Reimbursement/Education Assistance Program is defined as training program that is funded out of a dedicated County reserve and administered by the Human Resources Department. The Program is designed to reimburse employees for job related courses taken leading to a formal professional accreditation or degree from a college or university.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Requests For Tuition Reimbursement/Education Assistance

1. An employee must make the request for tuition assistance through his/her immediate supervisor by submitting an education plan. The education plan shall list and describe the courses that will be taken to achieve professional accreditation or a degree related to the employee's specific job duties.
2. The education plan must enhance the skills of the employee in his or her immediate position, or for a position that the employee might reasonably be expected to fill in the future through such management directed actions as promotion, reassignment, reclassification, transfer or creation of a new position. When employees have a choice of electives that may be taken to complete an educational plan, reimbursement will only be made for job related electives. It is recognized that some courses of study will require

the taking of electives that are not directly attributable to an employee's occupation but are necessary to complete the education plan.

3. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the employee's supervisor in advance of the closing of registration for the individual course. The request must include the total cost of the course and all information concerning the course, such as the name of the facility offering the course, course title, number of credit hours pursued, etc.
4. The Human Resources Director shall review the request for tuition assistance and, upon approval from the County Administrator, execute a Tuition Reimbursement Agreement (Appendix A). The agreement shall be made between the employee and the County whereby the employee will agree to reimburse the County the total cost of the tuition assistance should the employee terminate County service prior to twelve (12) months following completion of a course; prior to twenty-four (24) months following the completion of a bachelors degree; or prior to sixty (60) months following the completion of a masters degree.

B. Default Educational Provider

Fauquier County has designated Lord Fairfax Community College as its default provider for continuing education courses. If a course needed by an employee to complete a program of study is offered at Lord Fairfax Community College, tuition reimbursement will only be made if the course is taken at Lord Fairfax Community College. When required courses are not offered at Lord Fairfax Community College, employees may take the courses at other institutions. Exceptions to this stipulation may only be approved by the County Administrator.

C. Funding And Other Costs

1. All reimbursements are subject to the availability of funds. In the event that funding appropriated for tuition assistance is not adequate to accommodate all requests, funding consideration shall be granted first to those employees who have previously been approved to participate in the program and are currently working to complete their program or course of study. Thereafter, reimbursement shall be granted on a first come, first served basis, with those not receiving funding being placed on a waiting list.
2. The employee may take several courses in succession in order to complete a program or curriculum. The maximum number of semester hours reimbursable is 18 hours per fiscal year, based on the cost per semester hour at George Mason University. For specialized programs or courses of study that have no equivalent program or course of study offered at George Mason University, the maximum number of semester hours

reimbursable based on a cost per semester hour may be evaluated by the Human Resources Director and increased through approval of the County Administrator.

3. The employee must bear the initial cost of registration, books, tuition and other fees necessary for enrollment. After successful completion of the course by attainment of a grade of "C" or higher, or a "passing" grade for courses taken on a pass/fail basis, the employee, upon presentation of an official bill or receipt of payment, may be fully reimbursed at 100 percent of the total allowable costs for the period of instruction.
4. Allowable expenses include registration fees, tuition, lab fees and other charges for general school services. Allowable expenses do not include books, equipment, parking, mileage and/or meals reimbursement.

D. Course Attendance During Scheduled And Non-scheduled Work Hours

1. Efforts should be made to attend courses during non-scheduled work hours. If, however, this is not possible, courses may be attended during scheduled work hours, subject to supervisory approval.
2. In the event that approval is granted for class attendance during an employee's scheduled work hours, the employee will be required to make up the missed time or to use annual or compensatory leave to cover time away from the office.

E. Training As A Condition Of Employment

The Tuition Reimbursement/Education Assistance Program is a benefit for which employees may apply and not a condition of employment. Training and education mandated as a condition of employment shall be addressed under the County Training and Performance Evaluation policies.

F. Records Maintenance

A copy of all education and training courses completed by employees requiring official County approval for expenditure of County funds shall be placed in the employee's official personnel record

G. Program Responsibility

The administration of the County's Tuition Reimbursement/Education Assistance Program shall be the responsibility of the Human Resources Department.

Appendix A

**Fauquier County Government
Tuition Reimbursement/Education Assistance Reimbursement
Agreement**

I, _____, do hereby acknowledge and agree that should I terminate my employment with the County, or be terminated for cause, prior to twelve (12) months following completion of a course; prior to twenty-four (24) months following the completion of a bachelors degree; or prior to sixty (60) months following the completion of a masters degree my final County compensation will be less a proportionate share of educational reimbursements I have received from the County for my attendance at _____ (School or Institution). If my final compensation from the County is not sufficient to cover these costs, I agree that I will be responsible for full reimbursement of these costs to the County.

I hereby acknowledge that if I receive a grade of less than "C" or "Passing" the County will not reimburse any expense.

I also hereby acknowledge that _____ (Name of Official), has discussed this policy, the expenses for which I may be reimbursed, and the meaning of this agreement with me, prior to me receiving reimbursement and that I understand the terms of the policy and this agreement.

Signature of Employee

Date

Signature of Official

Date